



Press Release

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Prospective Plantings

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania farmers intend to plant more acres of oats, soybeans, and sorghum this spring and harvest more acres of dry hay and burley tobacco in 2005. Wheat acres planted last fall are up from the previous year as well. Barley and corn planting intentions and harvesting intentions for Pennsylvania seedleaf-type tobacco and Southern Maryland type tobacco are down from a year ago.

All wheat planted, at 180,000 acres, is up 29 percent from last year, and 3 percent above the 2003 planted acres. Expected barley plantings are estimated at 55,000 acres, down 15 percent from 2004, and down 27 percent from the acreage planted 2003. Expected oats planted acreage is 140,000, up 8 percent from last year, but unchanged from 2003.

Intended plantings of corn for all purposes are 1,350,000 acres, down 50,000 acres from last year and 100,000 acres below two years ago. Farmers also intend to plant 13,000 acres of sorghum in 2005, which is up 1,000 acres from last year, but down 2,000 acres from 2003.

Soybean acreage planting intentions are at 440,000 acres, 2 percent more than the 430,000 planted last year, and 60,000 more acres than two years ago. In the March Agricultural Survey Pennsylvania farmers were asked if they were aware of the discovery of Asian soybean rust in the United States and how its discovery had affected their planting decisions for the 2005 crop. Thirty-four percent of the Keystone state farmers surveyed reported that they had seen, read, or heard information about Asian rust. Among those farmers intending to plant soybeans, 87 percent were aware of the disease. Of all farm operators in Pennsylvania who were aware of the rust, only 4 percent said that it was a factor in their planting intentions, and of those farmers 19 percent intended to increase their soybean acreage, 43 percent intended to decrease their acreage, and 38 percent reported that they would not change their acreage from a year ago.

Intentions are to harvest 1,500 acres of Southern Maryland-type tobacco, down 32 percent from a year ago. Pennsylvania seedleaf-type tobacco harvested acreage is expected to be 1,300 acres, down 28 percent from last year. Pennsylvania farmers also intend to plant 2,400 acres of burley tobacco this year.

Harvest intentions for all dry hay in 2005 is 1,750,000 acres, up 3 percent or 50,000 acres from last year's harvest and 100,000 acres more than in 2003.

(over)

Farmers in the **United States** intend to plant 81.4 million acres of corn for all purposes in 2005, up 1 percent from 2004 and 4 percent above 2003. If realized, this would be the largest corn acreage since 1985. Expected acreage is up from last year throughout much of the Corn Belt and southern Great Plains. However, growers in most states in the Delta, Southeast, and northern Great Plains intend to decrease their corn acreage as producers are switching to more profitable crops due to low corn prices and high fuel and fertilizer costs.

Soybean producers intend to plant 73.9 million acres in 2005, down 2 percent from last year's record high acreage. Of the 31 soybean producing states, growers in 16 states intend to plant fewer acres this year, while producers in 11 states intend to plant more acres than in 2004. The largest acreage declines are in the Dakotas, where low soybean prices have some farmers shifting to other crops. Large declines in soybean acreage are also expected in the Delta and Southeast states.

All wheat planted area is expected to total 58.6 million acres in 2005, down 2 percent from 2004. If realized, this would be the lowest planted acreage since 1972. Winter wheat planted area for the 2005 crop is 41.6 million acres, down 4 percent from 2004. Of the total, about 30.5 million acres are Hard Red Winter, 6.6 million acres Soft Red Winter, and 4.5 million acres White Winter.

The 2005 intended sorghum area planted for all purposes is estimated at 7.40 million acres, down 1 percent from last year. Barley producers intend to plant 3.97 million acres in 2005, down 12 percent from last year and, if realized, the lowest barley planted acreage since estimates began in 1926. Oat acres seeded and to be seeded for the 2005 crop year are expected to total 4.27 million, up 4 percent from last year's planted area. All tobacco growers intend to harvest 319,860 acres in 2005, down 22 percent from both 2004 and 2003. If realized, this would be the lowest harvested acreage on record.

Acreage to be harvested for dry hay is expected to be 62.9 million in 2005, up 2 percent from last year. The two states with the largest expected increases are New York, which is up 470,000 acres from last year, and South Dakota, which is up 300,000. Acreage in Texas and Oklahoma is expected to increase due to beneficial weather conditions. A wet fall combined with a mild winter has allowed for adequate soil moisture and expectations of a larger hay crop in those states. Conversely, much of the Northwest has experienced an unusually dry winter with very low snow-pack levels leading to reduced expectations for hay in that region.

Data users are reminded that actual acreages planted may vary from intentions because of the effects of weather, availability of production inputs, and changes in market conditions prior to planting. Data users are also reminded that this report includes intentions to plant for all purposes.